



Safeguarding Policy

Written: March 2019

Updated: March 2025

Due for Review: March 2026

Overview

Rural Media works with communities, schools, groups and individuals to create issue-driven films, heritage and digital arts projects that raise awareness, influence change and celebrate rural life. We work locally, regionally and nationally with young people from diverse backgrounds who have a passion for film and digital art as part of our commitment to inclusive talent development.

This purpose of this policy is to set out Rural Media's actions and commitments for safeguarding all who participate in its activities, including employees and workers who may have contact with young people, children and venerable adults or adults at risk. We intend this policy to be proportionate and relevant to our organisation's activities and has been agreed by our Board of Trustees. This policy will be reviewed regularly and workers will be trained on its contents and advised to take an informed but common sense approach to safeguarding and protecting Young People and Adults at Risk.

It is important also to make the distinction between Safeguarding and Welfare of Young People and Adults at Risk with regard to Film, TV and Media Production and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with our Production Guidelines for working with Children, Young People and Adults at Risk and our Editorial Guidelines.

It is essential to the implementation of this policy that staff know how to deal with emergencies and to express concerns to the appropriate person in the organisation.

It is the responsibility of all staff to take action to prevent the suffering another person. Staff are not expected to be experts on abuse, but must at all times act with due regard for the Child, Young Person and Safeguarding Policy and awareness of its content.

It is not the responsibility of staff to decide whether a child, young person or adult at risk is being, or has been, abused or whether or not someone poses a risk to the welfare of a child, young person or adult at risk.

Staff are therefore expected to be familiar with this policy, to attend staff training sessions and to act in accordance with the procedures set down within this document.

Responsibility for this policy rests with Rural Media's Board of Trustees and the CEO.

Implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Lead.

Terms and Definitions

‘Rural Media’ is used throughout this document to mean both ‘Rural Media Charity’ [Companies House registered no. 02732325; Charity Commission registered no. 1041335] and its trading subsidiary ‘Rural Studios Ltd’ [Companies House registered no. 03751216].

‘Workers’ is used throughout this document and refers to staff, freelance contractors, volunteers and Board members

‘Child’ and ‘Young Person’ are both terms used to describe anyone who has not reached the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this policy we define children as those under 14 years and young people as those between 14-18 years.

‘Adult’ is anyone who is aged 18 years or over.

‘Adult at Risk’ is anyone aged 18 years or over who is at risk of abuse or neglect, who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of their care needs is unable to protect themselves.

Philosophy and Principles

- ❑ Rural Media is committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.
- ❑ All children, young people and adults at risk must be treated with care, respect and dignity.
- ❑ Those working with children, young people and adults at risk are in a position of trust, and must wholeheartedly respect and fulfil that trust.
- ❑ Communication with children, young people and adults at risk must be open and clear.
- ❑ The welfare and safety of the individual is paramount.

If a complaint or criminal proceeding occurs between a Rural Media worker and a third party, as a result of Rural Media’s direct or indirect involvement, it will be treated seriously.

All issues and allegations relating to safeguarding should be reported immediately to the designated member of staff:

Safeguarding Lead

Julie Colman

Tel: 01432 344039

Mobile: 07970 404966

Email: juliec@ruralmedia.co.uk

They will respond promptly, in line with the actions and commitments set out below.

Rural Media's Contact with Young People

Rural Media's workers may have direct contact with children, young people and Adults at Risk through educational and media production projects and productions, through training, and when working with young people to plan and develop projects and programmes. Examples include:

- Creative and Media workshops for young people;
- Film production training or young people;
- Film production and creative talent development and mentoring;
- Working directly with children, young people and Adults at Risk to plan and develop events, projects and productions
- Working with partners to develop specialist project work
- Consulting children, young people and adults at risk about our content and programming
- Questioning and surveying children, young people and adults at risk for project evaluations.

Rural Media will take steps to ensure workers do not have unsupervised contact with children, young people and adults at risk. However, occasional unsupervised contact may be required (eg; one to one mentoring) and for these posts the appropriate DBS or other checks will be obtained and 'safer working' guidelines adhered to.

Working with Partners

When working with or through a partner organisation, we will ensure they have a Safeguarding Policy in place, are aware of our guidelines and are using a risk assessment to ensure the safety of children, young people and adults at risk.

Risk Assessments

When Rural Media is the lead or sole organization all workshops and productions require a Risk Assessment. The risk assessment form helps us assess risk and prompt any action required to ensure the individual's protection. Once completed they must be signed off by Head of Production, actioned and filed. A risk assessment prompt sheet is appended to this policy.

Rural Media workers in contact with children, young people and adults at risk must ensure they are not placed in situations where abuse might be alleged. Workers should not find or place themselves in situations where there is unsafe equipment or materials, inadequate staff support, or work for which they do not have enough training or experience. Project planning should ensure the skills of the worker match the needs of the situation and training provided if necessary.

Code of practice for Rural Media workers

This applies to all contact with children, young people and adults at risk and is available to all staff, employees and freelancers as a quick guide and is an accessible guide to our expectations of staff, contractors and volunteers.

- Listen and respect everyone as an individual
- Value and respect children, young people and adults at risk as individuals
- Appropriately involve children, young people and adults at risk in decision making during activities
- Encourage and praise achievement
- Actively contribute to a culture where inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated
- Model an example of the good conduct you wish others to follow
- Make sure that there is more than one adult present during activities with children, young people and adults at risk, if it is unavoidable then make sure within sight or hearing of others – eg; if in a separate room leave the door open so you can be seen by others
- Do not transport individuals alone by car unless it is more dangerous to leave that young person or vulnerable unattended. Always inform your line manager or Safeguarding Lead of the journey, let them know when you leave and arrive and make sure the young person sits in the rear seat of the vehicle.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact – if contact is necessary for medical or health and safety reasons, where possible, explain why and seek consent
- Do not engage in or allow any sexually provocative language or activities to take place
- Do not make or permit suggestive or discriminating remarks to/or about children, young people or adults at risk
- Never meet children, young people or adults at risk outside of organised or formal interaction
- Never give out your personal information, or share email addresses, mobile phone numbers etc. with any child, young person or vulnerable adult
- Report all allegations/suspensions of abuse to your Safeguarding lead, Head of Production Julie Colman, including any allegation made against yourself or others, who will take the appropriate action.
- Make sure that any concerns about inappropriate behaviour are quickly and appropriately reported to your Safeguarding Lead, Julie Colman
- Make sure you are familiar with these guidelines and Safeguarding Policy and other Rural Media policies including Health & Safety, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Data Protection and Welfare of Contributors
- Send any messages for young people under 16 or adults at risk via their school, group leader, parent or guardian where possible. If using other social media messaging services always make sure you are always using a group including another appropriate adult and ensure the young people and adults at risk are not messaging you directly.
- If using email always use a Rural Media email address always copy in another staff member to your communication. DO NOT give out personal email addresses or phone numbers to young people or adults at risk.
- Do not follow or 'friend' children, young people or adults at risk that you are

working with or have worked with on social media.

- If you feel uncomfortable about approaches made to you by a young person or adult at risk, including via email or social media, reiterate Rural Media guidelines to them and inform your line manager and/or Safeguarding Lead of the situation.

Full Guidance

Guidance on the requirements for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk when working on Rural Media projects and productions.

1. Rural Media-led projects

The Head of Production, in consultation with the Project Manager must make sure that contact complies with Rural Media's policy on child/adult ratios and staff are appropriately qualified, trained and supported throughout the project or production.

The Rural Media worker responsible for the activity must ensure that:

- A risk assessment is carried out in advance and signed off by the Head of Production;
- Appropriate action is taken to mitigate any identified risks;
- Any necessary permissions are in place from the school, local council etc. and letters/forms to parents etc. have been sent out in advance;
- Contact details are recorded for each child attending without a parent or parent-nominated minder;
- An attendance register is kept
- First aid equipment and support is available in case of an emergency;
- Workers are fully aware of any severe allergies, or medical and access needs and the appropriate arrangements have been made.
- Staff-child ratios and all procedures conform with the guidance in 'A Safe Place for Children';
- Staff supporting the event have appropriate levels of DBS checks or other checks as appropriate;
- All young people and vulnerable have left safely after the activity;
- The worker has not been placed in a situation where allegations of abuse may be made.

2. Working with and through partners

Some contact with children, young people and adults at risk may be through partners such as schools, local authorities and voluntary or community organisations.

Our expectations of partners

Wherever contact is through these partners, Rural Media can reasonably expect them to:

- Have a Safeguarding policy in place;
- Use risk assessments and take action to ensure adequate safeguarding of young

people;

- Ensure contact is supervised by a responsible person from their own group in addition to any Rural Media representative (preferably with an up to date DBS check or other check as appropriate); Understand their responsibilities and ensure safe practices that protect the welfare and safety of the young person at all times;
- Understand their responsibility to conform with legislation on child/adult ratios and the registration of child care activities as appropriate;
- Obtain consent from parents, as they would automatically do for any out of school activity.

Film/Media/Photography

When Rural Media is acting as a lead or sole organisation then any photographs or video/film footage for possible publication must put the welfare of the young person at its centre. This means that individual permission must be obtained for the photograph/film to be published in the agreed formats and for specified purposes (parent's or guardian's permission required for young people under 16).

Completed permissions forms must be archived within the project folder by the responsible project lead, or must be sent to the Safeguarding Lead for filing.

When Rural Media is acting as a partner organisation, eg with schools, then it is reasonable for Rural Media to ask permission for photography well before the event from the relevant contact but should always allow the school or organisation to follow its own procedure.

Productions will always follow Rural Media's guidelines for Welfare of Contributors.

Recruitment and DBS checks

Rural Media workers have varying levels of contact with young people and will treat each case on its merits, employing one of the following solutions as appropriate:

- Requesting appropriate disclosures of the DBS through Hoople as our 'registered body' for workers who have contact in a position of trust with young people;
<http://www.criminalrecordchecks.co.uk/>
- Requesting other appropriate checks as laid down by current guidelines.

You may also be in regulated activity if you work or volunteer in certain places, including:

- Schools;
- Care homes;
- Pupil Referral Units.

There is no period of validity for a DBS Disclosure. A DBS Disclosure is technically out of date on the day it is issued as a new or further criminal conviction, caution, etc. may be recorded against the individual at any time after the issue date. There are no requirements to undertake periodic DBS Disclosures. However, Rural Media requires all those working in

regular contact with children, young people or adults at risk renew their DBS check every 2 years and are encouraged to be registered with the DBS Update Service.

Disclosures do not record convictions that were committed abroad. When recruiting employees or volunteers who have spent a period of time living or working abroad, a DBS Disclosure must be obtained in the normal way and a DBS Disclosure or equivalent from the country(s) concerned may be required as well.

In all circumstances every effort must be made to ensure a DBS Disclosure is obtained where necessary prior to an individual commencing work or volunteering with the Rural Media, or a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine and ensure that sufficient safeguards are in place to ensure the individual has no unsupervised access to children, young people or adults at risk.

If a positive DBS Disclosure (i.e. a Disclosure that reveals a criminal background or details that may be of concern) is received, then the individual concerned cannot commence work with children and young people until a risk assessment has been carried out to determine whether the risk can be taken and what safeguards would need to be introduced to manage that risk.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act a criminal conviction may not automatically prevent an individual from working with Rural Media. Amongst factors, the charity must consider the following:

- the requirements of the role and the level of supervision the individual will receive;
- the seriousness of the offence/issue raised and its relevance to the safety of employees, customers, participants or property;
- how relevant the offence is on the role to be undertaken;
- how much time has elapsed since the offence was committed and whether it was a one-off incident or part of a history of offending;
- whether the individual's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed making re-offending less likely;
- whether the individual was open and transparent about their past and declared their criminal background prior to receiving the DBS Disclosure.

Formal procedures

Allegations against staff, freelance works or volunteers

If an allegation is made against you, you should advise your line manager and the Safeguarding Lead even if you think it is trivial. If we receive an allegation against you we will inform you.

- All allegations of misconduct will be subject to standard procedures as outlined in your contract of employment and repeated below.
- You are entitled to the moral and practical support of your line manager, Safeguarding Lead and senior colleagues if an unwarranted allegation is made against you

Rural Media Child, young person and adult at risk Safeguarding Policy

- Any allegation will be scrupulously investigated, with due regard for confidentiality. In itself this should not be interpreted as indicating culpability. It is part of our duty to protect people working with us from any unfounded allegation
- If your behaviour contravenes this policy and guidelines, it will be treated as gross misconduct
- If you have concerns about how an allegation against yourself or anyone else is being dealt with, you should inform a colleague at the most senior level you think appropriate.

A referral will be made via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board Email: lado@herefordshire.gov.uk Telephone: 01432 261739

LADO's are involved in the management and oversight of individual cases. They provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations, in addition to liaising with the police and other agencies, and monitoring the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process. Some allegations may not need to be referred to the LADO but if you are in any doubt, please seek advice from the Herefordshire LADO office on (01432) 261739 lado@herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

What to do if someone discloses that they are being abused

It can take a great deal of courage for a Young Person to talk to an adult about what is happening to them and it can sometimes be hard for an adult to listen or recognise what is going on.

It is important that workers and volunteers know how to respond in an appropriate way.

- Accept what they are telling you.
- Be aware that they may have been threatened by the person abusing them. Reassure them that they were right to tell you and that you believe them.
- Keep calm and look at them directly.
- Listen to them without interrupting. Do not stop them when they are recalling significant events.
- Try not to question them directly or probe for more information.
- Avoid asking closed or leading questions (e.g. "He's been hitting you, hasn't he?").
- Remain calm and receptive; do not over-react or allow shock or distaste to show.
- Do not make assumptions or speculate, or make negative comments about the abuser.
- Make it clear you take them seriously and acknowledge their courage in telling you.
- Explain what you have to do and whom you have to tell.
- Do not promise confidentiality. If a child, young person or adult at risk has built up the courage to make a disclosure then they are putting you in opposition of trust and will want you to help them.
- Tell them what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what is happening.

What to do next if you believe that a child, young person or adult at risk is in need or at risk

- (1) You suspect a child, young person or adult at risk may be at risk of, is being, or has been, abused either by a member of staff, a member of their family, or anyone else
- (2) A child, young person or adult at risk tells you that they are being, or have been, abused. Make sure you are familiar with the steps set out below. This can happen very suddenly and surprisingly so make sure you are prepared. If you feel you need further support or training please speak to the Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.
- (3) You have concerns regarding the behaviour (past or present), towards children, young people or adults at risk of anyone connected with Rural Media.

Step One – Notify and Record

Do not delay - tell the Safeguarding Lead (or your line manager who will arrange for you to speak with the Safeguarding Lead) as soon as you can and explain your concerns.

In the case of (2) where a vulnerable adult or child has disclosed information to you about themselves or someone else, complete the referral form, a copy of which can be found at the end of this document Appendix A Give this form to the Safeguarding Lead, by hand, remembering this is **strictly confidential and highly sensitive information**. If the Safeguarding Lead is the subject of or is linked to your concerns or, for good reason you feel it is not possible to raise your concerns with your line-manager or the Safeguarding Lead, you must immediately contact the CEO Nic Millington, who will arrange for a confidential interview where you will have an opportunity to discuss your concerns. Do not discuss this with anyone else. However it is important that you receive appropriate support and/or counselling if needed which can be access using the companies Quest HR confidential counselling service.

Step Two – Internal Investigation

The Safeguarding Lead will create an appropriate action plan in agreement with the Dept CEO as a matter of urgency and certainly within 24 hours of receipt of any such notification. If needed they will consult as appropriate in order to agree the course of action. This could include the rest of SMT and/or the Board.NB: Actions may need to include suspension of a staff member or member(s), or the suspension or postponement of a project or activity.

Step Three – External Notification

In Herefordshire, referrals must be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Rural Media's Safeguarding Lead will feed this in to action plan if deemed appropriate.

Tel: 01432 260800

Appendix A

Referral form:

Your Name:

.....

Your Position:

.....

Your knowledge of and relationship to the individual:

.....

.....

Individual's name:

.....

Individual's address:

.....

.....

.....

Individuals Date of birth:

.....

Date(s) of incident(s)

--

Location of incident(s)

--

Nature of the concern/allegation. Write down what happened or what you suspect. If recording something said, try to use the child's own words.

Make it clear what is fact and what is your suspicion.

Print Your
Name:

Signed:

Date:

Appendix B

Further information and advice

Herefordshire Safeguarding Board
<https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/>

Disclosures and Barring Service information:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

HM Government: 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners'.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Related policies and procedures:

This policy statement should be read alongside our organisational policies and procedures, including:

- Anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Social Media policy
- Production Guidelines for working with Children, Young People and Adults at Risk in Film, TV and Media
- Editorial Policy
- Online Safety Guidelines